

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report**

**Homicide in North Dakota, 2000**



**Attorney General  
Wayne Stenehjem**



Report prepared by  
Judith H. Volk  
Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
Information Services Section

February 2002

Data collection, report preparation and publication of this report are supported by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

The term "homicide," for purposes of this report, includes the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Homicide refers to the "willful killing of one human being by another." It does not include attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, justifiable homicides or deaths caused by gross negligence.

## HOMICIDE IN 2000

- In 2000, eight homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population of 642,200, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 1.2 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Half of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** All of the victims were adults. "Adult" is defined as a person aged 18 or older. See Table 1 on page 2 for a summary of homicide incidents in 2000.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of three homicide victims. Two incidents involved knives. One victim died as the result of a beating and another was struck with a blunt object. In one of the incidents, the weapon involved is unknown.
- **Domestic Violence:** Six of the eight homicides in 2000 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** Seven of the eight identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All of the identified assailants were adults.
- While tribal law enforcement agencies and any other federal law enforcement entities in the state do not participate in the state UCR program, every effort is made to include all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

**Table 1  
Summary of Homicide Incidents  
North Dakota, 2000**

Date and Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapon Used	Relationship of Victim(s) to Assailant(s)	Circumstances
	AGE	SEX	AGE	SEX			
03/11/00 Fargo	39	F			Unknown		Victim was a homeless woman found under a railroad bridge.
04/01/00 Rural Belcourt Turtle Mt. Res.	43	M	29 28	M M	Pick-Ax Hammer Knife	Acquaintance Acquaintance	Victim died of multiple blunt trauma wounds to the head and neck and stab wounds to the chest.
09/08/00 Benson County	31	M	22	M	Blunt Object	Uncle	Victim was found in a house near Warwick. He died as the result of a skull fracture.
09/09/00 Cannon Ball Standing Rock Res.	43	F	30	M	Beating	Girlfriend	Victim was hit and kicked when the couple got into an argument.
09/17/00 Valley City	31	F	32	M	Handgun	Ex-wife	Murder-Suicide.
11/02/00 Watford City	40	M	44	F	Knife	Boyfriend	Victim was stabbed multiple times in the upper torso.
11/09/00 Grand Forks	37	F	42	M	Handgun	Wife	Murder-suicide.
12/24/00 Turtle Mt. Res.	38	M	47	M	Shotgun	Boyfriend of assailant's former wife	Victim was shot at the home of the assailant's former wife.

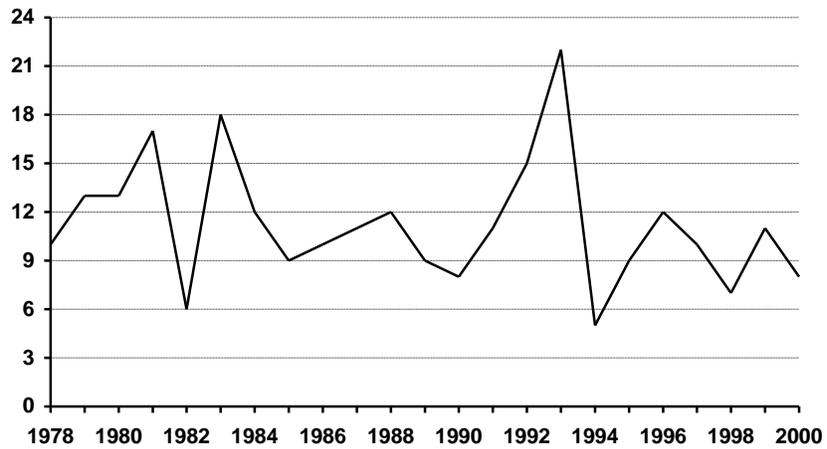
**HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES**

- Table 2 on page 3 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1978-2000.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

**Table 2  
Homicide Rate  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
1978	10	651,000	1.5
1979	13	652,000	2.0
1980	13	652,700	2.0
1981	17	652,200	2.6
1982	6	670,000	0.9
1983	18	680,000	2.6
1984	12	686,000	1.7
1985	9	686,000	1.3
1986	10	679,000	1.5
1987	11	672,000	1.6
1988	12	663,000	1.8
1989	9	660,000	1.4
1990	8	638,800	1.3
1991	11	635,000	1.7
1992	15	636,000	2.4
1993	22	635,000	3.5
1994	5	638,000	0.8
1995	9	641,000	1.4
1996	12	644,000	1.9
1997	10	641,000	1.6
1998	7	638,000	1.1
1999	11	634,000	1.7
2000	8	642,200	1.2

**Figure 1  
Homicide in North Dakota  
1978-2000**



## VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Fifty-nine percent of the 258 total homicide victims during the period 1978-2000 were male.

**Table 3**  
**Gender of Homicide Victims**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	6	4	10
1979	10	3	13
1980	9	4	13
1981	9	8	17
1982	3	3	6
1983	10	8	18
1984	5	7	12
1985	7	2	9
1986	8	2	10
1987	6	5	11
1988	8	4	12
1989	4	5	9
1990	3	5	8
1991	4	7	11
1992	10	5	15
1993	15	7	22
1994	1	4	5
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	5	2	7
1999	7	4	11
2000	4	4	8
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>153 (59%)</b>	<b>105 (41%)</b>	<b>258</b>

## **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE**

- Of the 258 homicides during the period 1978-2000, 85 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-eight percent of homicide victims were between the ages of 21 and 40. See Table 5 on the following page for information regarding age and gender of victims.

**Table 4  
Homicide Victims  
Juvenile and Adult  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978		10		10
1979	3	10		13
1980	3	10		13
1981	2	15		17
1982		6		6
1983	2	15	1	18
1984	5	7		12
1985		9		9
1986		10		10
1987	2	9		11
1988	1	11		12
1989	2	7		9
1990		8		8
1991	3	8		11
1992	3	12		15
1993	7	15		22
1994		5		5
1995	2	7		9
1996		12		12
1997		10		10
1998	1	6		7
1999	1	10		11
2000		8		8
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>258</b>

**Table 5**  
**Homicide Victims**  
**by Age and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unknown		1	1
Less than 1 year	5	6	11
01-05	4	4	8
06-10	1	6	7
11-15	2	3	5
16-20	13	6	19
21-25	29	10	39
26-30	20	12	32
31-35	11	12	23
36-40	16	14	30
41-45	13	6	19
46-50	9	7	16
51-55	11	6	17
56-60	1	3	4
61-65	5	3	8
Over 65	13	6	19
Total 1978-2000	153	105	258

## **WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

- Fifty-one percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1978-2000 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- Table 7 on page 8 provides information on age category of victims and type of weapon involved.
- Firearms were used in 46 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Fifty-two percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was somewhat more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Twenty of the 258 total homicide deaths involved the use of "personal weapons." Personal weapons include the use of hands, fists and feet as weapons.

**Table 6  
Weapons of Homicide  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Handgun</b>	<b>Other Firearm</b>	<b>Knife</b>	<b>Blunt Instrument</b>	<b>Personal Weapon</b>	<b>Other or Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	4	4	1		1		10
1979	3	3	2	1	3	1	13
1980	5	5	2			1	13
1981	3	5	3		1	5	17
1982		3	3				6
1983		9	4	2		3	18
1984	5	2				5	12
1985	3	2	1		2	1	9
1986	3	1	2	2	1	1	10
1987	2	4	5				11
1988	9				2	1	12
1989	2	3	2		1	1	9
1990	3	1	2	1	1		8
1991		4	1	1		5	11
1992	2	6	4	2	1		15
1993	6	4	5	2	2	3	22
1994	1	2				2	5
1995	2	2	1	2		2	9
1996	3	4	4			1	12
1997		1	1	2	4	2	10
1998		3	2			2	7
1999	1	4	3	1		2	11
2000	2	1	2	1	1	1	8
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>258</b>

- Forty-seven percent of homicides of males and 57 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-five percent of homicides of males and 11 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7  
Homicide Victims  
by Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	8	51		59
Other Firearm	9	64		73
Knife	1	49		50
Blunt Instrument	2	15		17
Personal Weapon	5	15		20
Other or Unknown	12	26	1	39
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>258</b>

**Table 8  
Homicide Victims  
by Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	35	24	59
Other Firearm	37	36	73
Knife	38	12	50
Blunt Instrument	13	4	17
Personal Weapon	13	7	20
Other or Unknown	17	22	39
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>258</b>

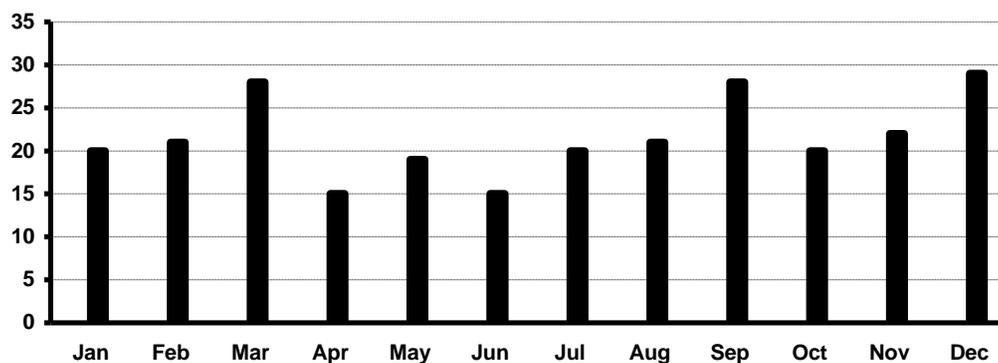
## MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1978-2000, more homicides occurred in the month of December than in any other month. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

**Table 9**  
**Deaths Due to Homicide**  
**by Month, 1978-2000**

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	20	7.8 %
February	21	8.1
March	28	10.9
April	15	5.8
May	19	7.3
June	15	5.8
July	20	7.8
August	21	8.1
September	28	10.9
October	20	7.8
November	22	8.5
December	29	11.2
Total 1978-2000	258	100.0

**Figure 2**  
**Homicides by Month of Occurrence**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**



## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS**

**For purposes of this report, domestic violence deaths include those involving a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, persons related by blood or marriage, persons in a present or former dating relationship, persons who are presently residing together or have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they are or have been married or have lived together at any time, other persons on premises when a domestic incident occurs, and romantic triangle situations.**

- For the period 1978-2000, 51 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10  
Domestic Violence Deaths  
North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>No Assailant Identified</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>
1978	5	4	1	10
1979	4	9		13
1980	7	6		13
1981	8	7	2	17
1982	4	1	1	6
1983	7	10	1	18
1984	10	2		12
1985	2	7		9
1986	5	4	1	10
1987	3	7	1	11
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	2	1	8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1		5
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	5	2		7
1999	6	5		11
2000	6	1	1	8
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>258</b>

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Sixty-eight percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 32 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-two percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 36 percent of males.

**Table 11**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	5	28	3	20
Other Firearm	8	42	1	20
Knife		21	1	24
Blunt Instrument	1	4	1	11
Personal Weapon	4	4	1	11
Other or Unknown	5	9	6	15
Total 1978-2000	23	108	13	101

**Table 12**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	13	20	19	4
Other Firearm	18	32	17	4
Knife	14	7	21	4
Blunt Instrument	1	4	12	
Personal Weapon	4	4	9	3
Other or Unknown	5	9	11	10
Total 1978-2000	55	76	89	25

## **CLEARANCE RATES**

- Cases may be "cleared by arrest" of an assailant, or "cleared exceptionally," if a physical arrest cannot be made for reasons beyond the control of law enforcement. An example of an exceptional clearance would be a case in which the assailant committed suicide after killing someone.
- "Clearances" should not be interpreted as "convictions." The information regarding clearances, collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the UCR program considers the case cleared. UCR data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 1978 to 2000 is 95 percent.

**Table 13**  
**Clearance Rates for Homicides**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cleared</b>	<b>Total Homicides</b>	<b>North Dakota Clearance Rate</b>	<b>National Clearance Rate*</b>
1978	9	10	90 %	76 %
1979	13	13	100	73
1980	13	13	100	72
1981	15	17	88	72
1982	5	6	83	74
1983	17	18	94	76
1984	12	12	100	74
1985	9	9	100	72
1986	9	10	90	70
1987	10	11	91	70
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	7	8	88	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	5	100	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	7	7	100	69
1999	11	11	100	69
2000	7	8	88	63

\* Clearance rates reported in annual Crime in the United States reports published by the FBI.

## **IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- During the period 1978-2000, 89 percent of the 255 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Thirteen homicides during 1978-2000 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

**Table 14**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**by Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	9		9 *
1979	14	2	16
1980	15	1	16
1981	9	3	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	17	2	19 *
1984	8		8
1985	12		12
1986	8		8 *
1987	10		10 *
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	3	3	6 *
1991	8		8 *
1992	11	3	14
1993	17	3	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	19		19
1996	13	2	15
1997	8	1	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	8	1	9
2000	7	1	8 *
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>226 (89%)</b>	<b>29 (11%)</b>	<b>255</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

- Eighty-five percent of the total 255 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 255 assailants identified by law enforcement, 66 percent were between the ages of 16 and 35. See Table 16 on the following page for information on age and gender of identified assailants.

**Table 15**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Juvenile and Adult**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	2	7	9 *
1979	2	14	16
1980	7	9	16
1981		12	12 *
1982		5	5 *
1983		19	19 *
1984	1	7	8
1985		12	12
1986		8	8 *
1987	2	8	10 *
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		6	6 *
1991	1	7	8 *
1992	2	12	14
1993	3	17	20
1994		5	5
1995	13	6	19
1996	1	14	15
1997		9	9
1998	1	6	7
1999		9	9
2000		8	8 *
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>37 (15%)</b>	<b>218 (85%)</b>	<b>255</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

**Table 16**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**by Age and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	19	2	21
16-20	43	4	47
21-25	51	3	54
26-30	32	2	34
31-35	26	7	33
36-40	16	4	20
41-45	15	6	21
46-50	6		6
51-55	5	1	6
56-60	5		5
61-65	4		4
Over 65	4		4
Total 1978-2000	226	29	255

## **WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS**

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns. For adults, long guns were used only slightly more often than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.
- For incidents involving the use of firearms, male assailants were more likely to use rifles or shotguns than handguns. Conversely, females were more likely to use handguns than other types of firearms.

**Table 17**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**by Type of Weapon and Age Category**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	2	48	50
Other Firearm	19	51	70
Knife	6	49	55
Blunt Instrument	4	19	23
Personal Weapon	2	20	22
Other or Unknown	4	31	35
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>255</b>

**Table 18**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	44	6	50
Other Firearm	66	4	70
Knife	42	13	55
Blunt Instrument	22	1	23
Personal Weapon	21	1	22
Other or Unknown	31	4	35
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>255</b>

- Forty-five percent of assailants identified by law enforcement were involved in domestic violence incidents. See Table 19 below.
- Assailants were more likely to use firearms in domestic incidents than in non-domestic incidents. See Table 20.

**Table 19**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	4	5	9 *
1979	5	11	16
1980	9	7	16
1981	7	5	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	4	15	19 *
1984	6	2	8
1985	2	10	12
1986	4	4	8 *
1987	3	7	10 *
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	2	6 *
1991	4	4	8 *
1992	8	6	14
1993	8	12	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	4	15	19
1996	7	8	15
1997	2	7	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	5	4	9
2000	6	2	8 *
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>115 (45%)</b>	<b>140 (55%)</b>	<b>255</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

**Table 20**  
**Weapon Use by Identified Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	27	23	50
Other Firearm	40	30	70
Knife	21	34	55
Blunt Instrument	4	19	23
Personal Weapon	9	13	22
Other or Unknown	14	21	35
<b>Total 1978-2000</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>255</b>

- Blunt instruments were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-two percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 42 percent for males. See Table 22.

**Table 21**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	1	26	1	22
Other Firearm	5	35	14	16
Knife	3	18	3	31
Blunt Instrument		4	4	15
Personal Weapon	1	8	1	12
Other or Unknown	2	12	2	19
Total 1978-2000	12	103	25	115

**Table 22**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2000**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	23	4	21	2
Other Firearm	36	4	30	
Knife	11	10	31	3
Blunt Instrument	4		18	1
Personal Weapon	8	1	13	
Other or Unknown	12	2	19	2
Total 1978-2000	94	21	132	8